

### Saving Lives at America's Highway-Rail Crossings and along Railroad Rights of Way.

#### From the State Coordinator

*Fred Hirsch*

#### The Media: Love Them or – Deal with it!

An 11-year old boy launched the best media coverage Maine Operation Lifesaver has had in years during 2006. Tragically, the child is not around for us to thank. Last Spring, he was the first rail trespass fatality in Maine in two years, and his youth touched the media in such a way that there were numerous follow-up stories on how this terrible incident could have been prevented by staying clear of railroad property. Even the three trespass fatalities which followed last year, a very high number for Maine, didn't muster as much media coverage. The Maine media – TV, radio, and the newspapers – provided the publicity we always look for and at no cost compared to the

tens of thousands of dollars we'd have to pay to insert display ads and commercials. Sure, we send out recorded public service announcements and ask for as much play as possible, but we don't get front page headlines or leading stories during the six o'clock news that we garner when tragedy strikes. Still, I think we'd all be much happier if we ended a year with no collisions, no trespass incidents, and no publicity. Wishful thinking.

Meanwhile, taming the national media is a different animal as we witnessed in 2006. Remember Lightning McQueen, the cartoon star of Disney's monster hit movie *Cars*? His dash across railroad tracks in front of a train was protested by our national office, but not even letters to Disney Chairman and former Maine Senator George Mitchell could get Lightning to cool it with some creative editing when the movie was later released on DVD.

The *CBS Evening News* ran a story on the remarkable recovery of a man severely injured by a train as a result of trespassing. Where did they conduct the interview? Right in the middle of the tracks where the guy was hit! And who didn't at least once or twice see the TV commercial for Capital One credit cards where the family rides the rails in a boxcar and throws mother-in-law out the door while on the move? Of course, she didn't get hurt in doing so, did she? Operation Lifesaver actually succeeded in convincing company officials to pull the commercial, but Capital One had second thoughts and the spot returned to the airwaves with much frequency – this time ignoring O/L's pleas.

Sometimes we win with the media, and sometimes we – well, we deal with it! (*A list of our media friends in 2006 appears on the second page.*)

#### Nearly 1000 Hours of Rail Safety Public Service

Maine Operation Lifesaver volunteers logged an estimated 948 hours of service on behalf of railroad safety to the Maine community in 2006.

This included presentations at schools, organizations, private companies, and recreation and service clubs. It also includes staffing at nearly three dozen events such as community fairs, train shows and similar events. Also logged were several hundred hours of paperwork, coordination of staffing, grant-writing, website maintenance, and financials. Forty Maine Operation Lifesaver volunteers gave their time during the year.

These hundreds hours of volunteer work breaks down as follows:

- more than 39 days, 24 hours a day/7 days a week, or
- 79 hours per month, or
- 18 hours per week, or
- almost three hours a day.

These hours *did not* include time given during 11 monthly meetings when an average ten volunteers met to discuss projects and strategy nor the countless hours driving to meetings, events, and presentations.

Maine Operation Lifesaver is always looking for volunteers interested in promoting railroad safety as certified presenters or associates.

E-mail [info@MaineOL.org](mailto:info@MaineOL.org) for more information

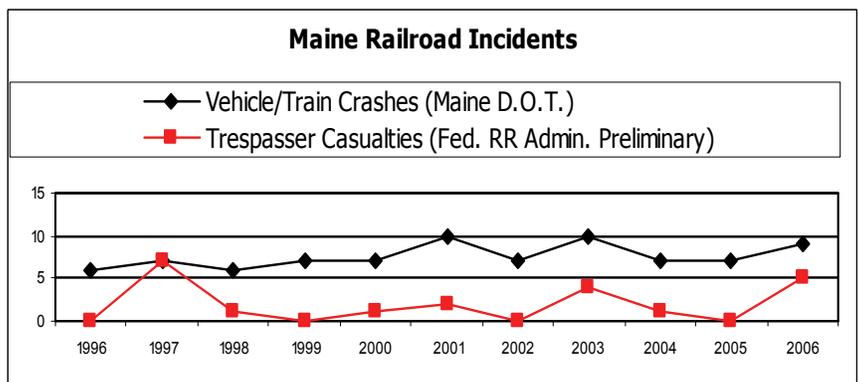
#### A Banner Year Getting Out and About

Take a look below at the variety and geographic range of the nearly three dozen community events Maine Operation Lifesaver volunteers attended handing out free material while raising awareness about railroad safety. This is believed to be the most events where Maine O/L had a presence in its 22-year history.

Hall of Flags/State Capital, August  
University/So. Maine Safety Fair, Gorham  
Auburn Mall  
Sanford Lions Train Show  
Great Falls Model RR Show, Topsham  
Veazie Fire Dept. Safety Day  
Southern Maine EMS Day, Portland  
Bath Fire Department Open House  
Fruit St. School Fair, Bangor  
Old Orchard Beach Safety Poster Event  
470 Day Waterville  
Canoe Hullabaloo, Old Town  
Catholic School Kids Day, Kennebunkport  
Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR Day, Unity  
Railfan Day, Oakfield  
Great Falls Balloon Festival, Lewiston  
American Folk Festival, Bangor

Orono Bicentennial  
Central Maine Power Safety Day, Lewiston  
Common Ground Fair Train Shuttle, Unity  
Maine Health/Safety Conference, Augusta  
Teen Driving Challenge, South Portland  
Maine DOT Safety Day, Farmington  
Brunswick Fire Department Open House  
Children's Discovery Museum, Bangor  
Wal-Mart, Waterville  
Maine Eastern RR Halloween Train  
Great Falls Model RR Club Show, Auburn  
NE Traffic/Safety Educators Assn, Portland  
Hannaford Health Fair, Bangor  
Eastern Maine Model RR Club Show, Brewer  
Auburn Recreation Department  
McLaughlin Foundation Trees/Trains, S. Paris  
Maine State Museum, Augusta

#### By the Numbers....



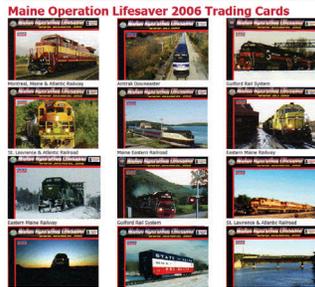
## Internet, Trading Cards Highlight New Outreach in 2006

The new media in the form of Maine Operation Lifesaver's website has grown substantially over the past year. Volunteer Margo Robinson has contributed over 100 hours developing the site and keeping it current. If you haven't visited [www.MaineOL.org](http://www.MaineOL.org) lately, or haven't seen the website at all, you'll find the latest news and safety advisories on the home page plus pages featuring our quarterly newsletters, background about the organization, a calendar of events we're attending, the



photo gallery, how to become involved in Maine Operation Lifesaver, links to our partner railroads and others, and a look at our railroad trading cards.

Speaking of those cards, they have become a big hit with young and old. Most of the 24,000 cards have been given away at schools, community events and aboard Amtrak's Downeaster. So popular are the cards that plans were underway in late 2006 to order more cards featuring a set of 12 new Maine railroad scenes. Each card includes a safety tip, information about the railroad featured in the photograph and information about contacting Maine O/L for more information.



## New Presenters Represent Various Interests

Two day-long presenter training classes in 2006 produced a number of new railroad safety advocates to spread our unified message.

They include:

- Sonia Moeller, Brunswick Police
- Tim Zimont, Conway Scenic Railroad
- Len Mulligan, No. New England Rail Passenger Authority
- Gary Johnston, Maine Central Railroad (retired)
- Barry Knowles, Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway
- Dan Stewart, Hampden Police
- Bill Soule, University of Maine (retired)
- Darin Estes, Lisbon Police
- Larry Warren, Federal Railroad Administration (Mass.)
- Bill Goldthwait, security specialist (retired, Mass.)

## Maine Media Helping Promote Rail Safety in 2006

The mission of Maine Operation Lifesaver was met with help from Maine's electronic and print media – some unfortunately as a result of train-vehicle and trespass incidents.

Here is where the rail safety message appeared:

WLBZ-TV, Bangor  
Bangor Daily News  
The Weekly, Bangor  
WV7I-TV, Bangor  
WCSH-TV, Portland



WABI-TV, Bangor  
Coastal Journal, Bath  
Me. Transport. Safety Coalition newsletter  
Journal Tribune, Biddeford  
Village Soup.com  
Maine Motor Transport Association Magazine

## Maine Government Agencies, Programs Benefit From O/L

Hundreds of state employees learned the importance of railroad safety while state leaders took the Operation Lifesaver message to employ as part of their programs in 2006. Among them:

- Instructors of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles' Dynamic Driving Course now include a 60-second video clip in their PowerPoint programs on the importance of safely crossing railroad tracks.
- Safety instructors with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife were briefed by O/L volunteers during sessions in Lewiston and Bangor. Those instructors lead courses on hunting, snowmobile and all terrain vehicle safety.
- Members of the Maine Traffic Safety Coalition, who include officials from education, public safety, labor and transportation among others, boarded Amtrak's Downeaster for a presentation on rail safety. Maine Operation Lifesaver, by the way, is a member of the MTSC.
- Over 200 Maine DOT employees were enlightened on safely crossing and working near railroad tracks as part of their appreciation day activities.
- Legislators and others viewed a Maine Operation Lifesaver exhibit during a transportation safety program in the Hall of Flags at the State Capital.

## Those Reached Through O/L Presentations...

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Driver Education Students	825	794	301	132	250	251
Driver Ed Instructors	0	11	23	8	0	0
Professional Drivers	153	308	0	172	84	455
Law Enforcement	0	54	33	57	98	65
Emergency Responders	935	0	168	123	104	135
School Bus Drivers	552	0	50	58	1213	43
Students (preschool - 12)	17472	570	5172	1161	3970	5102
Civic Clubs, others	17	307	41	364	349	567*
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>19954</b>	<b>2044</b>	<b>5788</b>	<b>2075</b>	<b>6068</b>	<b>6618</b>

\*Includes teachers at school presentations not reported in past years.

**For more information, to obtain educational material, or to arrange for a free safety presentation, go to [www.maineol.org](http://www.maineol.org), e-mail at [info@maineol.org](mailto:info@maineol.org), call (207) 827-7367, or write to Maine Operation Lifesaver, 23 Park Street, Old Town, Maine 04468**